

Chargers Week 13 Media Availability

Thursday, November 30, 2023 ⚡ Hoag Performance Center ⚡ Costa Mesa, Calif.

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR KELLEN MOORE

On the performance of the offense last week:

"Each game has good and bad. We certainly wanted to play better. We didn't get it done. You have to grow from it and you have to continue to try and find ways to navigate that."

On the final offensive drive last week:

"We missed some opportunities, so that's, obviously, frustrating. We have to find a way to close some of these opportunities out and take advantage of them. Protection-wise, we have to be on the same page. We have to communicate really well and have a good plan so that we can handle those situations. That is something that we have to execute better."

On QB Justin Herbert 'taking the blame' for the offense's performance late in the game:

"Justin [Herbert] is phenomenal in the way that he handles everything. For me, I have to build better plans. That's my main focus, just finding ways to navigate this thing and build better plans so that we can have the tools in the toolbox and be able to execute at a really high level."

On if the challenges that he is facing this year are 'different' compared to previous seasons:

"Every season is different. Every season has very different circumstances. One season doesn't necessarily dictate the other season, you have to be able to navigate it differently."

On the 'origins' of the lateral from WR Keenan Allen to RB Austin Ekeler:

"[*Laughter*] The Jets actually ran a version of it in 2021. We tried it in Dallas a few years ago and it has kind of always lingered with us. It's a play that's available based on those circumstances, and they aren't fun circumstances. We've repped it a lot. Those guys executed it at a high level."

On 'how long' that play 'has been in the playbook':

"I think that most of the season it has been available to us."

On 'why the run game hasn't materialized':

"That's a great question. If we had a perfect solution, we'd, obviously, be able to express it in a different way. There are times where we have those opportunities and we take advantage of them. For me, I'm always trying to navigate how can we build a better play to give ourselves the best opportunity to be successful. Obviously, it's not necessarily the numbers or the stats that you want, that you outlooked as you projected this thing out, but we're continuing to navigate that and trying to find ways to run the football more efficiently because we need to."

On how he 'feels about the run game on tape':

"I think that I'm just trying to find ways to put ourselves into really good situations to be successful. Are we creating matchups that are favorable for us? Are we putting ourselves in situations to be successful? Are we creating the matchups that we need or the schematics and alignments that we can take advantage of. We're constantly trying to find the answer."

On the 'identity that the group is searching for' in the run game:

"Certainly, there's a goal to be downhill when we can, with some of the tight inside zone and some of the duo-type run plays, where you get the double teams. That was always the goal and the outlook, and we still have, certainly, incorporated that a healthy dose. You're trying to navigate and find what are the other pieces and how can we continue to build this run game just to be as successful as it possibly can. If you have to navigate some other paths, we have to be open to that."

On if he 'still wants that to be the identity':

"That's still the goal, yeah. That is still the goal, to try and get downhill on people just because you can create the movement with double teams and get movement inside and get these running backs downhill. Really every week, we still had duo, still had tight inside zone. You can see those, certainly, on film. That's still the goal."

On 'how much' the unit is 'incorporating the RPO game' into the offense:

"RPO is, obviously, an awesome advantage, an awesome tool for offenses. Sometimes there's the unique aspect of, 'How has it been officiated?' I think that's a very important piece of it. The Dallas game was officiated in a certain way that we get called basically every single time we tried one. We kind of had to back off of that at that point. Every week is different. Sometimes you have to navigate how that is going to be policed. But, it's a part of the system that's really, really good, just so that you can give yourself tools and advantages outside and let the QB use his discretion when those opportunities present themselves so that we can give ourselves touches for perimeter guys and get them out in space."

On the lateral pass from Allen to Ekeler and 'why more teams don't use that':

"I can't speak to how everyone else views it. Obviously, I've always been intrigued by it. Watching it a few years ago, it has a little bit of a rugby-style to it. There are, obviously, different ways, sometimes those are challenging circumstances. When you play a really talented team like that, they're not going to give up any easy ones downfield. So, you have to try and get creative and give us a chance."

On comparing Allen to his former teammate with the Lions, Hall of Fame WR Calvin Johnson:

"Two of the best receivers, certainly, that I've ever been exposed to, in any way or seen in the NFL. Every player is different, but Keenan [Allen] just has a phenomenal way. He has a great presence, great awareness. He knows how to play this game at such a high level, from his route-running to his detail to his vision to, obviously, his hands. It's pretty incredible."

On 'late game situations' serving as a 'reflection of the quarterback' and if that is 'fair':

"It's part of the process. Whether you agree or disagree, it's kind of irrelevant. For myself, we missed opportunities. I have to find a way to build us a better plan to give ourselves a better chance to succeed in those situations."

DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR DERRICK ANSLEY

On OLB Khalil Mack being named AFC Defensive Player of the Month:

"You wouldn't know he was 32 [years old], unless you looked at his driver's license [*laughter*]. He's playing fast. He's playing with emotion, playing with power. He's playing consistent. Congrats to him for winning AFC Defensive Player of the Month. If you asked him, he would say that's a defensive team award because a lot of people helped him get those sacks. He's got them a lot on his own, too. Kudos to him for getting that award."

On Mack's season:

"He's having a great season. He's healthy. He's a leader, energetic, playing the run at a really high rate. He's rushing the passer. You guys see the sacks and the QB pressures. He's getting the ball off the quarterback with strip sacks. He's playing a complete game at the defensive end spot."

On Mack avoiding injuries:

"We're smart with him too. [Head] Coach [Brandon] Staley and [Outside Linebackers Coach] Giff [Smith] do a really good job of sparing him when we need to spare them throughout the week, make sure that he gets the looks that he needs and continue to develop the young guys, as well, with [OLB] Tuli [Tuipulotu], [OLB] Andrew Farmer II and [OLB] Brevin [Allen]. Continue to get those guys going and [OLB] Justin Hollins on board. We have plenty of reps to go around. We don't try to wear him out through the week. We give him the reps that he needs. He gets a vet day here or there. He's ready to go on Sunday."

On the changes to the defense against Baltimore:

"It was all about the players, it wasn't really anything the coaches did. We ran the same plays we always run. Our players have really made their mind up how they want to go play and they showed how they can play when they're capable."

On DB Deane Leonard and S Jaylenn Hawkins:

"I wouldn't say that they played better than anybody. They did their job. Deane had some slants that he tackled, got them on the ground quickly. Jaylenn did a really good job of making some tackles in space, ran the show back there. Those guys did their job, they had an opportunity on primetime against a really good offense. They were up to the challenge. So, very proud of how they played."

On the changes to the defense:

"No, it was just something that we decided to do for this week. You guys have to make that perception of whether it was better or not. We didn't win the game, so it wasn't good enough. There are always things you can improve on. We have the right mix of guys in our room and guys that didn't get to play, they're still competing. They did a heck of a job on special teams and at some point, we'll need them again before the season is over, as well."

On the defense for Week 13:

"I think we'll find out on Sunday what lineup we'll start out there. The guys are practicing hard, everybody gets reps. We practice a lot, in terms of getting the volume of reps. Today was third down, so you saw a lot of different combination of defensive backs in there. We're going to play the guys that we think give us the best chance to win. The good thing is we have a bunch of good guys in that room that are all for each other."

On the 'challenge' of preparing for three quarterbacks:

"They're all kind of different. [Patriots QB] Mac [Jones] and [Patriots QB Bailey] Zappe are kind of similar and then you have [Patriots QB] Malik [Cunningham], who has a different skillset than those guys. We have to get ready for whoever goes out there. They're all kind of different, but they're all kind of the same. It starts with the ground game, with those two backs that they have who are really, really good. [Patriots Offensive Coordinator/Quarterbacks Coach] Bill O'Brien has coached a lot of good ball there and [Patriots Head] Coach [Bill] Belichick. They'll have whoever they put under center ready to go. They all have our full attention."